

Cities of the East

H

CITIES OF GOD.

Intro. Sunday school discussion about Jerusalem the City of God.

My observation of our western cities and towns.

Better streets, more modern buildings,
beautified homes, cleaner conditions.

Gardens and parks. New churches and schools.

Many great cities of the past built according to such ideals but they all failed-Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, Athens.

Many Utopias planned, but they remain dreams.

The Hebrew prophets had their vision of a city of beautiful, based, not upon a material basis and secular order, which invited corruption and decay, but upon the righteousness of God.

We take our text from the closing vision of Zechariah, which pictures Jerusalem as the spiritual temple of the whole world.

I. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, "Holy unto the Lord". 14:20.

Jerusalem a city fed from the outside. Caravans from near and far bringing produce to the city. On the bridles of the horses were bells. These carriers of the city's supplies were rough and uncouth, bringing with them influences and practices demoralizing.

The prophet sees the day when the carrier of the cities food stuff shall be as the priest/holy unto the Lord. This commerce of the world stands for business. The day is coming when business shall be conducted according to the righteousness of God-it shall be a service rendered as unto the Lord. All business, from the common toiler to that of the great executives shall be for the good of the humanity and not merely for profit. *It will mean the sanctity of labor.*

Horses entering a city had another significance-they heralded conquering kings. Horses had come and Jerusalem had been overthrown. But they would come again this time however, Holy as unto the Lord. **The worldly attitude is now hostile to God and righteousness, but it will change to one of obedience and cooperation.**

The changed attitude of heathen countries towards **Xmasaries**. So all mankind will someday welcome God

II. And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

The bowls before the altar kept clean and polished for the sacrificial blood. The other vessels of the temple neglected and allowed to accumulate dirt and rubbish. The time would come when every part of the temple worship would be kept consistently clean and holy.

We do not have the temple worship any longer but we have a worship to which our text may well be applied.

Our services of worship and our prayers may be likened to the temple worship, to the bowls before the altar. The service we render as Xns may be likened to the other vessels. Right in the act of prayer we are apt to be most inconsistent and hypocritical. Because of our neglect of other Xn duties we are tempted to be dishonest on our prayer life. In the home, on the street, in society and in business, as well as before the altar, Xns should be "Holy before the Lord".

III. Ye, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judea shall be holy unto the Lord.

Here the scene changes from the temple to the homes of the communities. The housewives performing their duties in the home as unto the Lord. Their cooking utensils kept as clean as the bowls before the altar in the temple! Aye, the home is humanity's best temple. When the home is polluted and ungodly, other temples such as the school and the church cannot be kept clean. The home of Mary and Joseph, the mother and father bringing up the child Jesus until he realized and lived in the presence of God! Man's holiest memory is that of his home in which he was brought up to trust and love God. When our homes become as Holy as unto the Lord, we'll not have to fear the corruption of our country.

IV. The concluding words of the prophet, our conclusion—"And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts."

The Canaanite was rebel to the commandments of Jehovah, corruption to the sanctity of the Lord's worship. Jesus found the Canaanite in the temple and

drove him out.

5.

drove him out with a scourge.

True, we do not offer sacrifices as did the Hebrews but our souls are as temples of the living God, and in them Canaanites may be found trafficking in holy things.

Selfish greed, corrupting lust, defiant will, murder-our hatred and jealousy, lawlessness, degrading pleasures, and many other evil influences lurk within the soul ever ready to corrupt the pure worship of God.

Thank God for our improved cities- for cement highways, modern homes of every convenience and comfort, city parks, properly equipped schools, inviting places of business, attractive houses of worship, but unless we drive the Canaanite of evil influences out of our communities, these things will not save us.

This Community Church should serve the one purpose of helping Vacaville, in its home and institutional and social life, to approach as nearly as possible the realization of the prophet Zechariah for a city the whole of whose life is Holy unto the Lord.

Another picture contained in our text. The bells on the horses entering Jerusalem and all vessels of the city and temple and state clean because they all were needed in the temple worship in the City of God to which the children of God from all parts of the world were coming to worship.

If we would have the world of humanity turn unto God we must keep the whole of our life in state and home and city and business Holy unto the Lord. The world's salvation demands of us consistent conduct in all our actions and relationships as Xns.